

Says Workforce Development Must Focus Must Be Focus on Economic Revitalization Efforts

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WASHINGTON, DC – Addressing more than 100 of the world's top CEOs, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) outlined critical improvements needed to prepare our next generation for economy prosperity. Congressman Sestak spoke at The Wall Street Journal CEO Council forum Rebuilding Global Prosperity, which was convened to develop an urgent action plan for ensuring long-term global prosperity, with an emphasis on the shared responsibility of business and government. He focused specifically on training our workforce for the high-value manufacturing jobs for the 21st century, such as green energy technology.

“To compete in the market with other countries, our schools and colleges will need to work with businesses and industries to develop experience-based curriculum that train people for advanced manufacturing fields,” said Congressman Sestak. “In addition to mentorship, this requires an increased focus on improving the performance of our young people in math and science.”

The Congressman referenced a 2005 National Academies of Science report, *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, which highlighted the causes of the erosion of the United States advantages in science and technology. Specifically the study found only 68 percent of U.S. eighth grade students received math instruction from a teacher with no math certification or degree and 92 percent of fifth through ninth graders were taught physical science by a teacher with no science degree of certification.

The Congressman advocated for the reports recommendations to: increase America's talent pool by vastly improving K-12 mathematics and science education; sustain and strengthen the nation's commitment to long-term basic research; develop, recruit, and retain top students, scientists, and engineers from both the U.S. and abroad; and ensure that the United States is the premier place in the world for innovation.

“One important area to encourage greater innovation is in alternative energy technology,” said Congressman Sestak. “In 2006 alone, the renewable energy and efficiency industries generated 8.5 million jobs and nearly \$970 billion in revenue in the United States. Alternative energy companies will never fully prosper in this nation, however, if we do not prepare our students for the jobs these businesses need.”

In addition, Congressman Sestak discussed the need for a stronger commitment to early education to improve opportunities for our students. He cited studies showing its benefits. For

example, in Chicago, students enrolled in pre-K programs were 29 percent more likely to graduate from high school when compared to their peers who did not attend prekindergarten. Moreover, an evaluation of Maryland's early-learning programs showed that fifth-graders who attended pre-K were 44 percent less likely to repeat a grade than those fifth-graders who did not. According to University of Chicago researcher James Heckman, every dollar spent on getting very young children ready to learn saves taxpayers seven dollars in foregone social costs.

“We must enhance our early education programs, such as Head Start, particularly by ensuring that we train well-qualified teachers for pre-Kindergarten jobs and providing them the resources they need to succeed in those jobs,” said Congressman Sestak.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, the Congressman was the first Director of Deep Blue, the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the Global War on Terrorism. He served as President Clintons Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Congressman Sestak is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.

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